

B. Claims

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and listings.

1. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a cleaning blade, the process comprising the steps of:

(1) drying a blade formed of a urethane resin so that the urethane resin has a water content of 1% by weight or less;

(2) after the drying, impregnating with an isocyanate compound at least a contact portion of the blade, which said contact portion is to come into contact with a toner holding member;

(3) after the impregnation, blowing warm air or hot air on the blade surface to remove the isocyanate compound remaining on the blade surface, the warm air or hot air having a temperature not lower than the melting point of the isocyanate compound; and

(4) allowing the urethane resin that forms the blade to react with the isocyanate compound with which the blade stands impregnated, to form a cured layer formed chiefly of allophanate linkages,

wherein the isocyanate compound has at least two isocyanate groups in one molecule.

2. (Previously Presented) The process for producing a cleaning blade according to claim 1, which further comprises, between the steps (3) and (4), the step of further removing with a solvent the isocyanate compound remaining on the blade surface.

3. (Previously Presented) The process for producing a cleaning blade according to claim 1, wherein the step (2) is carried out by immersing the blade in an isocyanate compound bath.

4-10. (Cancelled)